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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 OMB-01 IO-13 TRSE-00 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 ACDA-12 MCE-00 /118 W
----------025239 071457Z /14
R 061135Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7016
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 1555

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, SU
SUBJECT: DETERIORATION OF PUBLIC MOOD IN SUDAN

SUMMARY: MOOD IN KHARTOUM HAS BECOME GLOOMIER THAN IT HAS BEEN FOR SOME TIME LARGELY BECAUSE OF SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH AFFECT MAN IN STREET AND THERE SEEMS TO BE CONSIDERABLY MORE GRUMBLING GOING ON. THIS IN TURN MAKES CERTAIN OTHER PROBLEMS MORE NOTICEABLE THAN OTHERWISE WOULD BE THE CASE. SITUATION WILL ADD TO NIMEIRI'S PROBLEMS AND WILL MAKE MORE DIFFICULT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT RPT NOT ANTICIPATE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN SUDAN FOREIGN POLICY WE DO FORESEE A PERIOD OF GREAT PRESSURE ON NIMEIRI AS HE TRIES TO COPE WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY

1. THERE APPEARS TO BE DETERIORATION IN PUBLIC MOOD THROUGHOUT SUDAN. WE HAVE NOTICED MORE THAN USUAL AMOUNT
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OF GRUMBLING OVER VARIETY OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. VIRTUALLY EVERY SEGMENT OF THE COMMUNITY IS SERIOUSLY INCONVENIENCED OR WORSE BY CONTINUING INFLATION AND SHORTAGES. IN SOME PARTS OF COUNTRY CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE HAD TO GO UNPAID AND IN MANY COMMUNITIES THERE PERSISTENT SHORTAGES OF ELECTRICITY, FUEL AND OTHER COMMODITIES. TYPICAL MAN IN STREET FEELS CRUELLY SQUEEZED BY INFLATIONARY PRESSURES AND

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HE WONDERS WHEN ALL THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS HE HEARS SO MUCH ABOUT WILL HAVE FAVORABLE IMPACT ON HIS DAILY LIFE.

2. MOST DRAMATIC MANIFESTATION ON THIS MOOD HAS BEEN RECENT LABOR UNREST (KHARTOUM 1538). IRONICALLY UNDER LIBERALIZED POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT THERE HAS BEEN MORE OPEN DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS PARTICULARLY SINCE PARLIAMENT HAS RESUMED. EVERY DAY SEVERAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT COMPLAIN OPENLY ABOUT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACED BY THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

3. SOUR MOOD RESULTING FROM ECONOMIC PROBLEMS MAY BE SPREADING TO OTHER ISSUES AS WELL. WE HEAR COMPLAINTS ABOUT CORRUPTION AT HIGH LEVELS OF SUDANGOV, AND SOME INDIVIDUALS ARE ANNOYED OR AFRAID BY "COMMUNIST" ACTIVITY. IN SHORT, AT LEAST AMONG SOME PEOPLE, THERE IS DISENCHANTMENT WITH POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AS WELL AS WITH DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION.

4. THIS MOOD CAN BE EXPECTED TO COMPLICATE SEVERAL MATTERS ON NIMEIRI'S AGENDA. IT WILL MAKE ANY DECISION TO ACCEPT IMF ECONOMIC REFORMS EVEN MORE EXCRUCIATING. NIMEIRI WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO TIGHTEN UP RELATIVELY LIBERAL POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT THAT NOW EXISTS. AS ALWAYS THE POSITION OF THE ARMY WILL BE CRUCIAL AND THEREFORE BID BY LOCKHEED BACKED BY SAUDI ARABIAN AGENT ADNAN KHASHOGGI TO WIN MAJOR MILITARY

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CONTRACTS (KHARTOUM 1531) WILL HAVE TO BE WATCHED CAREFULLY BY NIMEIRI IN CASE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD AROUSE STRONGLY ANTAGONISTIC FEELINGS AMONG KEY MILITARY PERSONNEL, WHICH IS A POSSIBILITY.

5. THUS IN ADDITION TO SECURITY PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO LIBYA AND CHAD IN THE WEST AND ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA IN THE EAST AND IN ADDITION TO HIS PRIORITY TASK OF REPATRIATING ARMED ANSAR REBELS FROM LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA IT APPEARS THAT IN NEAR FUTURE NIMEIRI IS GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE CLOSER ATTENTION TO BREAD AND BUTTER LOCAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS, BUT AS LONG AS SEVERE FINANCIAL PRESSURES CONTINUE HE WILL HAVE VERY LITTLE AMMUNITION TO MEET THE BASIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THAT ARE AT THE BASE OF SUDANESE PUBLIC CONCERN.
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